

(Extracted from an explanatory paper on the principles of the popular British Flora).  
 To render the present Flora more useful to a large number of botanical amateurs, who may not be familiar with the Latin language, I have felt the necessity of making use of English names, at least for the species, and as far as practicable, for the genera also, adding only the Latin ones as a guide to their concordance with more scientific works.

My first intention was merely to have taken the English names from Hooker and Arnott's British Flora as our standard work; and upon conference with Professor Beauvois I found that such had also been his intention in those works for elementary instruction in Botany, in which he also found it necessary to adopt an English nomenclature.

But here the same difficulty occurred to both of us. The English substantive names in the British Flora are not strictly generic, but, in most cases, trivial names given in popular language to one or more species or varieties of plants without reference to their botanical genera. And although in many instances, an attempt has there been made, by extending or restricting the popular sense of these names or by the addition of one or more adjectives, to produce a vague <sup>sort of</sup> systematic nomenclature; yet, as it is not relied on for use, it is not attempted to reduce it to the Linnæan rules.

Thus we find:

One name applied to two or more very distant genera as Coralroot to Gentiana and Corallorhiza, Loosestrife to Lythrum and Lyimachia, Nightshade to Atropa and Solanum, Wintergreen to Pyrola and Menyanthes, Chickweed to Malachium Holosteum & Cerastium but not (as a generic name) to Stellaria which contains the common Chickweed.

Two three or more names given to one genus as Crowfoot and Spearwort Spirea Dropwort and Meadowweet, Periwinkle, Britton, Knotgrass and Bracken.

Substantive or adjective names or both consisting of two or more words giving such long winded names as Hypox-leaved purple loosestrife, Hedge bastard stone Parsley, Woodseed treacle Mustard, Sulphurwort water dropwort, Bulbiferous great roundheaded Garlic, European Chickweed Wintergreen, Silt leaved bastard Toadflax, and creeping pale blue Toadflax, one being a Nomen the other a Descriptive - to the great confusion of substantives and adjectives, of names and of epithets, of trivial and scientific names as well as of botanical affinities.

Names particularly indicative of one natural order or group made use of in the formation of the generic names of very different families thus Grass is applied to Cochlearia, Draba, ~~Juncus~~ Galium, Fregloschia Eriophorum and a number of others, Nettle to Hesperis, Nettle to Sabicea, most of the Cyperaceæ are called Rushes, whilst the Acorus is termed a Hedge etc.

The generic name or names given at the head of the genus not always applied to all the species ~~included~~ included in it as in the case of *Prunus caprea*, *Prunus*, *Silene acaulis* & *inflata*, *Hypericum androsaemum* etc.

In instances similar to the above might be very much multiplied I have felt myself justified in concluding that there was no intention in the above work of framing a regular English nomenclature for practical use, an operation which yet remains to be performed. In making the attempt I have endeavoured to keep in view the following rules

For generic names,

1. To adopt established popular names wherever they can be readily applied to all the species included in the botanical genus and are not otherwise objectionable as Oak, Willow, Gt. Oat, Mint, Labious etc.

2. Where the popular names are inapplicable or objectionable to take the Latin generic name as English. Many of these Latin names are already familiar to all who have gardens as *Camellia*, *Ranunculus*, *Anemone*, *Geranium* &c. etc., and the remainder are as easily learnt as any other ones we could devise, besides that for those who would go a step further in botany they are names which must be learned to refer to almost any botanical work. Where these Latin names are long I have sometimes endeavoured to render them more easy by cutting off a syllable in the termination as Corydal, *Adonis*, *Potamo*, *Myrica* etc. It has been suggested to me that this might be carried much farther in imitation of the French, but it is not so much in the genius of our language and might lead to a disagreeable affectation. The generic names rejected as objectionable for genera

1. All those exclusively designating some species only of the genus, for it is not English to call an Apple a Pear or a Cherry a Plum. The Cloud-berry is neither a Bramble nor a Raspberry, Bedstraw (properly Ladies Bedstraw) a name suggested probably by the appearance of downy covered with the golden flowers of *Galium verum*, is as inapplicable to *Galium aparine*, as is the name of Cleavers to *G. verum*. In some cases such as Crowfoot I have had some hesitation but as it is not very applicable either to our wild *R. lingua* & *flammula* or to the garden *R. acutifolius* I have preferred using in English as well as Latin the name of Ranunculus already in familiar use among gardeners.

2. All names consisting of two words, not only from the inconvenience of their length, but as leading to the greatest ambiguity whether one of the words is specific or part of the generic name, more especially as in these cases the substantive part of the double name is that of some very different genus such as Dog Arphodol, Water Plantain, Squeeze Laurel, Black Bryony etc.

Exceptions to this rule are where the two words are so completely connected or not even to require the intervention of a hyphen such as the compound of weed, wort, berry, nut etc. Even where the principal word in the compound would by itself be indicative of a distinct genus, ~~it may~~ it may not be objectionable if indicative of the order or tribe to which the genus belongs named by the compound word belongs such as Rock-rose and whatever in Cruciferae Wood-rush in Genesee Quake-grass in Gramineae etc. A farther exception might be made in favor of a few words so fully engrafted in the language that the sense of the integral parts is in some measure lost right of as in Water-lily, Bow-thistle etc.

3. A few so-called English names to be found perhaps in some old herbals, but unknown in common language - applied indeed to plants too rare or too insignificant to have acquired a trivial name. For where an unknown name must be learned, it is as well at once to learn the scientific one. Many rejected on this account are Cypher, Madwort, Mudwort, Blinkwort etc.

4. A small number of dirty or disgusting names. For although I do not see the necessity of calling attention to the indecent derivations of some of the Latin names of older botanists, ~~generally adopted in scientific works~~ ~~generally adopted in scientific works~~ ~~generally adopted in scientific works~~ by changing their names on that account, it is a very different thing in settling a botanical language for common use to introduce the coarse terms of the middle ages into the more refined vernacular of the present day. Pedicularis suggests no idea but that of the plant so called, Sewewort can scarcely be used without recalling disagreeable associations.

As to specific names the rule is that they should be English one-worded adjectives with however the following exceptions:

1. Where the species has a well-known popular name not too long nor too absurd, for it gives the facility of speaking of the species in common language, by the single specific denomination when no reference to its botanical affinities is needed. Thus I would adopt in our scientific nomenclature the name of tutan *Hypericum*, apple *Pyrus*, service *Pyrus*, rowan *Pyrus* etc. which we would commonly call the tutan the apple the service the rowan etc. (not mountain ash which it would be very desirable to abolish if possible altogether) but I should not propose to take up the *Go-to-bed-at-noon* *Salsify*, the *Jack-by-the-hedge* *Alliaria* or the *Fairmaid* of *February* *Snowdrop*.

2. Where a simple English adjective is not sufficiently explicit a compound one must be retained in English as in Latin, *large-flowered* - *large-leaved* which cannot be rendered by *large* alone. In some cases indeed the adjunct *leaved* may be omitted *Willow* *Spirea* and *ivy* *Prunella* may do so well as *willow-leaved* or *ivy-leaved* for the resemblance is derived from something

more than the leaves, but generally speaking I have found it necessary to retain the -leaved.

Where specific names already proposed are unquestionable the rule of priority of course requires their adoption, but then the question arises; if the English name specific names in the British Flora are at variance with the established Latin ones to which does the rule of priority apply? Had the English nomenclature been regularly established the preference should certainly have been given to it in all cases, but loose and uncertain as it is, perhaps a little more latitude may be allowed where a closer approximation to the meaning of the Latin one seems desirable.

Names adopted for Ranunculaceae

<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	Common Clematis	<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh Caltha
<i>Thalictrum alpinum</i>	Alpine Thalictrum	<i>Frodoia europaei</i>	Globe Frodoia
<i>nigra</i>	Black	<i>Helleborus viridis</i>	Green Hellebore
<i>flavum</i>	Yellow	<i>foetidus</i>	Stinking
<i>Anemone pulsatilla</i>	Parque Anemone	<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	Common Columbine
<i>nemorosa</i>	Wood	<i>Delphinium consolida</i>	Field Larkspur
<i>Adonis autumnalis</i>	Corn Adonis	<i>Aconitum napellus</i>	Common Aconite
<i>Myorinum minimum</i>	Common Myorine	<i>Actaea spicata</i>	Common Ranberry
<i>Ranunculus aquatilis</i>	Water Ranunculus	<i>Paeonia corallina</i>	Coral Peony
<i>lucida</i>	Great		
<i>ophioglossifolius</i>	Snake-tongue		
<i>flammula</i>	Spear		
<i>scabra</i>	Dropwort		
<i>acris</i>	Wood		
<i>repens</i>	Creeping		
<i>bulbosus</i>	Bulbous		
<i>hircutus</i>	Hairy		
<i>acris</i>	Corn		

As to Natural Orders I had at first intended to call them the Ranunculaceae Family - the Ranberry family, etc. as you do but as I have scolded everything in conjunction with J.D. Hooker & Kenlow, & Kenlow stick much by his words and rather rather like them. I have given in aid adopted them. I think

however of not sticking so much to precision as he does, and would say for instance *Verberanthes* instead of *Verberidantha* 91, Kington Street, S.W. May 20/87

My dear Grey The above extract and illustration and the enclosed specimens page of my Popular British Flora are the best answer I can give to the main queries of your letter - I shall be glad to send you next week the whole name of the Brit. Fl. if you will adopt them where species are identical. It goes to Paris on the 15th. I have stayed there 3 or 4 weeks then make a tour in the west of France and return here in October 1887 after which I shall begin printing.

In a parcel Hooker is sending you I have put the 7 copies of the last sheet of N. Kater. & parts of *Proctoloma chircellana*.

I forgot to look upstanding at Kew about *Prinos* *Reuthamionia* It is described I believe in the Hort. Soc. Journal (p. 20) and mentioned I think in Stanton the *terrestris* - as both being a good species I do not know - I hope not.

I shall be glad of any criticisms on the specimen page as to type arrangement etc. as well as matter. My idea in giving the general station of a species as well as the British distribution was to show how much a portion of the area of the species the British localities form and consequently how little important it is that a plant found one year in Sussex should appear the next in Levesey, and rather to enlarge than contract the idea of local botany. I admit about 1200 of specimens of ferns have been above 1800. Ranberry above 1800 but then many are not reductions of species but specimens of growth plants which never were really British. Yours ever sincerely George Dontham